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DISCOVERIES IN CENTRAL ASIA AND TIBET.

The expedition to Central Asia and Tibet, sent out in the spring of 1899 by the Russian Geographical Society, under the command of Captain P. K. Kozloff, has accomplished very important results. The geographical discoveries relate (1) to the Chinese or Mongolian Altai, the great mountain chain extending across western Mongolia from Siberia far towards China; (2) to the Gobi, between the eastern part of the Southern Altai and the northern frontier of China; and (3) to the eastern part of Tibet, known as the Kam.

Distinctive features of the expedition were: the sending out of separate excursions from the main body of the caravan, thus widening the domain of exploration; the maintenance for fifteen months of a meteorological station in eastern Tsaidam (northeastern Tibet), the first time that such work has been done in Central Asia; and the study of the depths, flora, and fauna of Central Asian lakes with the aid of a canvas boat.

The Altai were explored both on their northern and southern sides. It was found that the part of the mountains lying to the west of Kobdo (about 92° E. Long.) are high, and contain masses of glaciers and snow-clad peaks. These mountains have abundant precipitation and extensive forests. To the east of Kobdo, however, the mountains rarely reach the snow-line, and, owing to the dry southern winds from the Sungarian desert and the Gobi, have few forests and Alpine meadows, though the Mongols here raise many sheep, cattle, horses, and some camels.

The Gobi desert was crossed in three directions by various expeditions led by Kozloff and his companions Ladyghin and Kaznakoff. They found the Gobi very different from the descriptions usually given of it. The Gobi has often been represented as a flat land covered with sand and having no mountain features except in its western part. The northern part of the Gobi, however, for about 200 miles southward, is crossed from east to west and from northwest to southeast by mountains and ranges of hills, among whose valleys Mongols, with their herds of camels, are occasionally found. This part of the Gobi is easy of access, and is crossed by many routes provided with wells containing sweet or slightly brackish water. The central part of the Gobi is hilly in the northern portions and sandy in the south. It was crossed successfully by Kaznakoff, with the assistance of the Mongols. The southern part is a barren

desert, covered with sand. Here all the riding horses died for want of grass.

The third field of exploration was the Kam, as the little-known and mountainous eastern part of Tibet is called. Being under the influence of the monsoons from the Indian Ocean, it is rich in rainfall, which feeds the mighty rivers that have their source on the plateau.

Great ranges of snow-clad mountains, with many lower ranges and deep river valleys and narrow gorges between them, characterize the Kam. Further west, where the surface of the plateau becomes even higher, it is less mountainous, the dryness of the climate progressively increases, and grass is supplanted by a gravelly desert.

The region shown in the accompanying map, based upon a map in *The Geographical Journal* (1902, May, p. 579), is the scene of Kozloff's explorations in the Kam. His route is depicted, and also the mountain ranges that form the water-partings between the great river systems of the Hoang, Yangtse,



WATER PARTINGS BETWEEN FOUR GREAT RIVERS.

Mekong, and Salween. The lake sources of the Hoang appear in the map; the Yangtse rises further west on the plateau, and the sources of the Mekong are probably much further in the interior than they have yet been shown on the maps. The natives said the upper Salween was an insignificant river, easily forded, whose sources lie in the mountains, not far from the high road to Lhasa.

On the road to Tsamdo the party was attacked by a military detachment of Tibetans, who were repulsed after a sharp fight.

Representatives of the Lhasa authorities, however, implored the Russians not to enter the monastery of Tsamdo, which is one of the great sanctuaries of Tibet. The explorers accordingly turned east and wintered in the warm, wooded valley of the Ra-Chu, a tributary of the Mekong. Here meteorological and astronomical observations were made, numerous specimens of the flora and fauna were collected and many materials relating to the history and ethnography of the Tibetans. The country was explored as far eastward as the monastery Derghe-gonchen.

The population of this part of Tibet is partly settled and partly nomad. The settled inhabitants have their houses and farms in the valleys and gorges, where they grow cereals up to an altitude of 12,000 feet. The nomads pitch their black tents in the region of the Alpine meadows, whose upper limits are some 3,500 feet higher than the limits of the agricultural zone. The settled population, living better than the nomads, occupy houses of small logs or wickerwork covered with clay, usually two to three stories in height—the lower floor for the cattle and the others for the inhabitants, and also for grain and hay storage. The dress of both sexes is sheepskin, though in summer the richer folk wear a sort of woollen dressing gown. They practice polyandry, several brothers often taking one wife.

The work of the expedition included about 8,000 miles of survey, forty determinations of geographical positions, daily meteorological observations, many photographs, and very rich natural history collections, which are now being studied by specialists in St. Petersburg. The fullest reports on the work of this fruitful expedition, excepting those in the *Izvestiya* of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society, have appeared in *Petermanns Mitteilungen* (1901, pp. 90, 160, 182, 205, 237, 260; 1902, pp. 137, 163, 184), and in *The Geographical Journal* (May, 1902).